9: Pool S-4 (no date) 1954 E1 Europe
Rumania ED1

726 *648 to the German military campaigns against the southern regions of the Soviet Union. Numbering approximately thirty divisions, the Romanians first achieved the reconquest of territory which Russia had recently severed from Romania. The Romanian forces were then moved across the Dniester to support the Germans in the successful campaign against Odessa. The Romanian Army was in large measure responsible for the successful siege of Sebastopol and the capture of the Crimea. In the autumn and winter of 1942 an estimated Romanian force of fifteen divisions fought alongside the German troops in the offensive against Stalingrad. Like the Germans, the Romanians suffered extremely heavy losses at Stalingrad, and their military strength on the Eastern Front was never again brought up to the level existing prior to that campaign.

[727] By August 1944 Romania had lost 110,000 men killed and 180,000 captured, though she still had twenty divisions active on the front and nine divisions stationed in the interior of Romania. By that time it had become clear that Germany was not going to win the war and that Romania had chosen the wrong side. The pro-Nazi government of Marshal Ion Antonescu was overthrown on August 23, 1944, by a coup d'état engineered by King Michael. Romania immediately changed sides in the war. The former enemy, Russia, became a military ally and the Axis associates of three years past became enemies. The Romanians faced the immediate task of clearing the country of the more than half million German troops remaining there. This was accomplished relatively quickly. The Red Army was in Bucharest by the last day of August. Then in co-operation with Soviet forces the Romanians participated in the campaigns against the German and Hungarian Armies in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

• 704 *648 Along with the regular Romanian troops used in these actions there were two divisions of Romanians which had been organized by the Soviets primarily out of prisoners of war and which for some time had already been fighting on the Soviet side. The members of these divisions gave their oath of allegiance to the "new order" not to the Romanian king.[26]

These two divisions were culled from among a much larger number of Romanian PW's. Besides the 180,000 PW's in August 1944, another 280,000 Romanians were seized and sent to Russia thereafter even though Romania was presumably Russia's ally. Of these hundreds of thousands the large majority never returned. A substantial portion of those who did return were the members of the divisions formed in the PW camps. These units were named the Tudor Vladimirescu and Horia-Closca-Crisan Divisions. The former was under the command of Nicolae Cambrea, a lieutenant colonel who had been captured at Stalingrad and who had been won over by the efforts of Ana Pauker and other Romanian Communists who worked in the prison camps. After the fighting on the Central Euro-

9: Pool S-4 (no date) 1954 E1 Europe
Romania ED1

pean Front ended, it became a major factor in the new Romanian Army. The Horia-Closca-Crisan Division was organized later and did not become quite so important in the War but it also provided much thoroughly indoctrinated personnel for the Communist regime.

Another group of ex-PW officers returned long after the war was over. In 1946 the Communists sent back 500 specially selected and indoctrinated officers. Those 500 officers were led by the then Colonel Victor Draganescu, a career artillery officer who has since become Major General, Ministerial Councillor in the Ministry of Interior, and commander of security troops. These 500 officers were greeted by big Communist-sponsored demonstrations and their return was presented as a token of Soviet magnanimity. Draganescu said, "We express our gratitude toward Generalissimo Stalin, because of his large understanding granted the Rumanian Government in allowing Rumanian prisoners to return even before the conclusion of peace."[27]

Re-trained PW's were thus one major source of Communist officers. Another source was a para-military force organized beginning in the autumn of 1944 by Emil Bodnaras. This was the "Guard of Patriotic Defense." It was equipped by the Soviet Occupation Army from captured German supplies. At the same time a law was passed incorporating all "anti-fascist fighters" into the Romanian Army in a bloc. "Actually the number of Partisans operating in Rumania during the war against Germany had been infinitesimal."[28] They were mainly organized afterwards by the Communists who decided who was to be considered as having been an anti-fascist fighter. Under this law such leading Communist politicians as Emil Bodnaras, Vasile Luca, George Vasilichi, and Ana Pauker became generals.

Another special force which the Communists built was that of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, (for a while divorced from that Ministry and placed in a separate Ministry of State Security, but perhaps now recombined.) The government of the Romanian People's Republic has devoted much attention to these special security forces. Some measure of their importance is revealed by the fact that a couple of years ago the budget for these troops was considerably larger than that of the Ministry of Armed Forces.[29] A more satisfactory index of relative size is troops. The troops under the Ministry of Interior number at least 120,000, but probably 160,000, while the regular army was estimated by Tito as 300,000 in 1950, but is probably only 225,000.

While the ranks of the officers corps were being filled with Communists, regular officers were dismissed <u>en masse</u> after the War. The first purge had already occurred with the coup d'état of August 1944 even before the Communists were involved. The Sanatescu government formed at that time was staffed largely by generals who had not been closely identified with the previous Antonescu regime or who, like Generals Radescu and Aldea, had opposed it. The generals